

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 EB-08 HA-05 /072 W
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R 200940Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8519
INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
USLO PEKING
CINCPAC HONOLULU

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 2150

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, TH
SUBJ: PRIME MINISTER KRINAGSAK SPEAKS TO FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS
CLUB OF THAILAND

SUMMARY: IN SPEECH DELIVERED TO FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS CLUB OF
THAILAND JANUARY 20 PRIME MINISTER KRIANGSAK CHAMANAN GAVE
UPBEAT, REASONABLY OPTIMISTIC OVERVIEW OF SITUATION IN THAILAND.
THEME OF RECONCILIATION SOUNDED ON ALMOST EVERY SUBJECT. HE
MADE FOLLOWING MAJOR POINTS: END SUMMARY.

1. PRESS. "THE PRESS REFLECTS THE IMAGE OF THE GOVERNMENT IN
THE EYES OF THE PUBLIC ... I HAVE GIVEN MORE POWER TO THE PRESS,"
AND I "WANT CONSTRUCTIVE COOPERATION" FROM THE PRESS. WE WILL
ACCEPT CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM, BUT I AND MY CABINET WILL MAKE
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THE DECISIONS. REGARDING "CLANDESTINE" LEAFLETS WHICH APPEAR
FROM TIME TO TIME, "WE KNOW WHO IS BEHIND THEM, BUT WE ARE NOT
TAKING ANY ACTION BECAUSE THE PUBLIC KNOWS HOW TO TREAT SUCH
THINGS." OUR "OPEN GOVERNMENT" PERMITS GREATER ACCESS TO IN-
FORMATION. UP TO NOW THERE HAS BEEN "HARDLY ANY MISQUOTATION OR
DELIBERATE DISTORTION. THE PRESS HAS LIVED UP TO ITS
RESPONSIBILITIES."

2. ELECTIONS. THE MOST IMPORTANT PRIORITY OF THE THAI GOVERNMENT IS "TO PREPARE FOR GENERAL ELECTIONS." A PERMANENT CONSTITUTION IS BEING DRAFTED, PROVIDING FOR THE KIND OF "STABLE DEMOCRACY" NECESSARY TO THE COUNTRY, BUT PROVIDING ALSO FOR THE PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION. AT THIS POINT WE CANNOT SAY WHEN ELECTIONS WILL TAKE PLACE, BUT THIS IS BEING WORKED OUT.

3. RURAL DEVELOPMENT. ANOTHER TOP PRIORITY IS THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL AREAS, AS WELL AS FOR PEOPLE IN URBAN SLUMS. IN THIS TASK THE RICH WILL HAVE TO HELP, BECAUSE IT IS IN THEIR INTEREST, AND ONLY IN A FREE SOCIETY CAN THEY ENJOY THEIR WEALTH. THE WEALTHY WILL HAVE TO SACRIFICE. THERE MUST BE AUSTERITY. REGARDING RURAL IRRIGATION, "OUR FRIEND JAPAN" IS GIVING US ASSISTANCE IN THIS AREA.

4. LABOR UNIONS. I BELIEVE IN BOTH LABOR UNIONS AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING, BUT WE MUST BE WARY OF ATTEMPTS TO CAUSE UNREST BY "ALIEN IDEOLOGIES."

5. INVESTMENT. MORE INVESTMENT IS NEEDED. THAI GOVT. HAS ALREADY CUT RED TAPE. WE WANT TO EXPAND OIL REFINERY CAPABILITY IN PARTICULAR.

6. FOREIGN POLICY. VIETNAM HAS "COME AROUND" TO SEE THE MUTUAL BENEFIT OF COOPERATION IN OUR REGION, IRRESPECTIVE OF IDEOLOGY. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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"REGRETTABLY," THERE HAS BEEN "NO SUCH UNDERSTANDING WITH CAMBODIA." HE REITERATED THAILAND'S WISH TO BE FRIENDS AND TO HAVE TRADE RELATIONS WITH CAMBODIA. AS FOR LAOS, "WE CONSIDER THE PEOPLE OF LAOS OUR BROTHERS," AND ARE GLAD THAT RELATIONS HAVE IMPROVED.

7. REFUGEES. THAILAND HAS ALWAYS EXTENDED HOSPITALITY TO ITS NEIGHBORS AND IN ACCEPTING THEM WE HAVE NEVER TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION PERSONAL POLITICAL BELIEFS (AN OBVIOUS REFERENCE TO PAST SRV CRITICISM). REFUGEES HAVE ONLY TO OBEY OUR LAWS AND REFRAIN FROM POLITICAL ACTIVITIES. US AND OTHER DEVELOPED COUNTRIES SHOULD "ADMIT MORE THAN THE TOKEN NUMBER THEY HAVE TAKEN SO FAR." THEY HAVE TAKEN ONLY THE CREAM OF THE REFUGEES, LEAVING THAILAND THE LEAST QUALIFIED.

8. BURMA. WE ALSO HAVE REFUGEES FROM BURMA. WE WANT THE SAME KIND OF FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH BURMA AS WITH ASEAN.

9. ASEAN. SRV DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER TRINH'S RECENT VISIT TO THAILAND INDICATES SOME DEGREE OF ACCEPTANCE OF ASEAN, WHICH IS NOT A MILITARY ALLIANCE.

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10. INSURGENCY. RTG NOT INGNORANT OF THE EXISTENCE OF
EXTERNAL SUPPORT FOR CPT. BUT IF GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS
FOR DEVELOPMENT DENY INSURGENTS MASS SUPPORT DOMESTICALLY,
WE NEED NOT FEAR EXTERNAL SUPPORT. EXCEPT FOR THE CPT,
WE REGARD ALL SEGMENTS OF SOCIETY AS "WELL-INTENTIONED".
REGARDING STUDENTS WHO FLED TO JOIN THE COMMUNISTS
(FOLLOWING COUP OF OCT 1976), I HAVE SAID THAT THEY
ARE WELCOME BACK. THEY ARE NOT MY ENEMY. MANY HAVE
COME BACK, BUT I WON'T DISCLOSE THEIR NAMES TO SAVE
THEM EMBARRASSMENT. WE WANT TO HAVE FRIENDLY RELATIONS
WITH CHINA, USSR, AND EASTERN EUROPE. I HAVE ACCEPTED
AN INVITATION TO VISIT THE PRC AND WILL PROBABLY GO
IN MARCH. I HOPE FOR EXPANSION OF TRADE WITH THESE
COUNTRIES. REGARDING THE USSR, WE NEED THEIR FRIENDSHIP.
IT IS IMPORTANT TO ANY CONCEPT OF NEUTRALITY IN SEA.
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11. U.S. WE HAVE ALWAYS REGARDED THE US AS A CLOSE FRIEND. WE DON'T WISH US FORCES BACK, AND DON'T WANT TO SEE CIRCUMSTANCES ARISE REQUIRING THEM. RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE DEFENSE OF THAILAND LIES PRIMARILY WITH US. REGARDING A RECENT LETTER RECEIVED FROM PRESIDENT CARTER, I VALUE IT AS AN "EXPRESSION OF PERSONAL FRIENDSHIP FOR ME AND FRIENDLY INTENTIONS TOWARD THAILAND AND THE THAI PEOPLE."

12. HUMAN RIGHTS. "WE HAVE MADE CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS. WE ARE PREPARING TO RESTORE POLITICAL RIGHT OF VOTING. ALTHOUGH THERE IS MARTIAL LAW, NO ONE FEELS DEPRIVED OF FREEDOM." THE STUDENTS ON TRIAL (REFERENCE TO "THAMMASAT 18") HAVE LAWYERS.

13. NARCITOCs. MY POLICY IS "PREVENTION AND SUPPRESSION." GREATER COOPERATION FROM THE US, UN, AND OTHER COUNTRIES ARE CALLED FOR." ALSO BURMA, LAOS, MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE MUST COOPERATE. "SEVERE PENALTIES" AWAIT TRAFFICKERS AND PRODUCERS. AT THE SAME TIME, "THE US AND OTHER COUNTRIES HAVE TO GET TOUGH WITH THEIR OWN NARCOTICS OFFENDERS" AND UPGRADE THEIR SUPPRESSIVE POLICY ALSO.

14. Q. AND A. WHAT ABOUT THE RUMOR OF A THAI-CAMBODIA MEETING? NOT TRUE YET. WHAT ABOUT EXPELLED JOURNALIST NORMAN PEAGAM? I'LL THINK ABOUT IT. INDOCHINA CONFLICT A THREAT TO THAILAND? NO, IT'S BETWEEN VN AND CAMBODIA. WHAT ABOUT THAI-CAMBODIAN BORDER? INCIDENTS ARE MINOR. "WHEN SOLDIERS FACE EACH OTHER, THEY FIGHT. THAT'S ALL." ARE STRIKES LEGITIMATE? THE STRIKERS ARE NOT SUBVERSIVES. BUT WE MUST PRESERVE LAW AND ORDER, AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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VIOLATORS WILL BE PUNISHED. WAS THE VISIT OF ASST. SECRETARY DERIAN INTERFERENCE IN THAI INTERNAL AFFAIRS? NOT AT ALL. THE REFUGEE PROBLEM IN WHICH SHE SHOWED PARTICULAR INTEREST IS AN INTERNATIONAL PROBLEM AND IF OTHER COUNTRIES TAKE REFUGEES, IT IS GOOD FOR THAILAND. WHITEHOUSE

NOTE BY OC/T: SNM, IO AND AID TREAT AS ORIGINAL.

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